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Status of the

Literature Retrieval Division

Version Submitted to Attorneys

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ACTIVITIES

A. Elimination of Document Backlogs. During 1981 we accomplished our goal to complete the re-classification of documents in the Preliminary Data Base using our expanded classification system. We also classified 10,000 other documents that were input into the System this year. A total of 16,600 documents were classified compared to approximately 11,000 in 1980. All documents in the Preliminary Data Base have now been classified, and we are up-to-date.

During 1981 we accomplished our goal to eliminate all document backlogs at the various stations of the operation through and including updating of the data bases. All documents are now retrievable via the computer, and we are up-to-date.

B. Asbestos Literature. During 1981 we continued to identify, gather and process previously published articles from the asbestos literature. Almost 1,700 additional articles were identified. These articles should be processed and incorporated into the System by February 1982. At that time there will be in the System approximately 7,700 documents that deal with the health or biological effects of asbestos. This is by far the most comprehensive collection we know of, and we believe that the collection is essentially complete on the subject of the alleged involvement of smoking in asbestos-related diseases. It is anticipated that additional articles will be identified in the course of the Division's ongoing effort to complete its collection.

During 1982 we expect to re-evaluate all documents that deal with asbestos that are not fully processed (approximately

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4,800 documents) and to process them at higher levels if warranted. This subject is amplified in Section D.

C. Occupational Respiratory Disease Literature. There are claims that smoking is involved in the etiology of fibrotic lung diseases other than those caused by asbestos. We believe that it is essential, therefore, to have a basic collection of articles that deal with the etiology and epidemiology of fibrotic lung diseases and conditions. The Division has been collecting this literature on a prospective basis since early 1979.

This effort has not increased the total number of articles being selected for inclusion in the System. Indeed, the total number of articles selected during 1981 was less than the number selected during 1980, even though we have been monitoring both the asbestos literature and the other occupational and fibrotic lung disease literature.

We selected fewer articles during 1981, in part, because we had previously taken a number of actions to curb the input into the System of certain types of routinely selected articles. Thereafter, as a result of our experience, we refined and tightened our selection guidelines for the occupational and fibrotic lung disease literature as well. (A copy of the revised Scope of Coverage and Notes to the Scope of Coverage (September 3, 1981) is attached.) The revised guidelines are a departure from our previous approach of selecting virtually every article dealing with occupational diseases and agents. Instead, the selection of these articles is now limited to only the most relevant material, following the traditional guidelines that we use for the other literature that we monitor.

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During 1981, projects were initiated to retrospectively identify previously published articles dealing with occupational and fibrotic lung disease without reference to asbestos. We originally had estimated that there were 6,000 of these articles. However, we already have identified 20,000 published from 1950 to date, and we estimate that another 8,000 were published between 1900 and 1949, for a total of approximately 28,000. Of the 20,000 already identified, we believe that at least half will be eliminated by merely applying current selection criteria. In addition we believe that selection of this literature should be further curbed by limiting input mainly to articles published in English and German. During 1982 we expect to begin selecting, gathering, and processing some of the articles that we already have identified. At present, we do not recommend continuing with projects to identify articles published prior to 1950.

D. "Enriching" Documents. Certain lower level processed documents may require additional processing ("enriching") to enhance their retrievability and to expedite analysis. These "enriched documents" will thus be processed at levels that are intermediate between lower level and full processing. We have completed our feasibility studies, and during 1982 we plan to implement a system for processing documents at intermediate levels. Thus, we will be able to accomplish our stated objective to process documents only to the extent necessary to assure retrievability and to expedite analysis.

Intermediate levels of processing will be implemented both for documents that are input into the System prospectively and for certain lower level processed documents already on hand. Candidates for intermediate level processing will include approximately 7,900 lower level processed documents now on hand that mainly deal with mesothelioma

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or other occupational and fibrotic lung diseases and conditions, including approximately 4,800 asbestos related documents. These documents will be evaluated to determine whether they should remain as lower level processed documents or be further processed ("enriched") by the addition of a few precoordinated descriptors and textual material. The textual material may include an abbreviated LRD abstract, all or part of the original author abstract, and/or selected original text. It is anticipated that original author abstracts, if present, ultimately will be added to the data base on a routine mechanical basis for most lower level processed documents, including those now on hand.

Because intermediate level processing requires an on-line computer system, implementation will depend on our success in converting the present system.

E. System Conversion. We have begun implementing the conversion of the current batch system to an on-line environment using an in-house minicomputer. We have contracted with AIM Active Services, Inc. to provide a turnkey system using an Alpha Micro minicomputer to handle data entry, data edit and word processing. The Alpha Micro is a small minicomputer that is relatively inexpensive and relatively easy to program and operate. It has a high industry rating for overall performance and is noted for minimal down time. In addition, we have contracted with Bibliographic Retrieval Services (BRS) to provide on-line search of our data bases on a time-sharing basis. BRS is a well-known company that provides access to commercially available data bases and also maintains and provides access to private data bases. Based on our prior experience with this firm, and our various studies, we believe that their on-line system is superior to any that is currently available.

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Our goal is to have both the Alpha Micro system and the BRS system operational by April 1982, and, thereafter, to effect certain planned enhancements. Subsequently, we intend to continue our studies in connection with converting on-line search from a time-sharing system to an in-house system.

F. Aperture Card Production. During 1981 we eliminated all document backlogs at the various stations of the operation and nearly doubled our shipments of aperture cards as compared to prior years. During 1982 and thereafter, we intend to further increase our shipments until all remaining documents have been microfilmed. During this interim period we will continue to provide hard copies of documents requested by Users. In addition, we intend to prepare and temporarily warehouse one back-up copy of all articles that have not yet been microfilmed.

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GOALS FOR 1982

The following goals have been established for 1982:

1. Complete the conversion of the current batch system to an on-line environment.

2. Implement a system for "enriching" lower level processed documents. Use this procedure for documents that are prospectively input into the System and for certain lower level processed documents already on hand.

3. Begin selecting, gathering and processing certain articles published from 1950 to date that deal with occupational and fibrotic lung diseases and conditions.

4. Continue to increase the production and shipping of aperture cards. (Note that it is anticipated that the number of aperture card sets being prepared and distributed will be decreased.)

5. Continue our studies in connection with converting on-line search from a time-sharing to an in-house system.

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